

18th Century Philadelphia "At a Glance"

Teacher Information Section

This section of the Teacher Guide is designed to provide the teacher with helpful information in an easy-to-read format. Before and throughout your teaching of this program, you can quickly read through these descriptions and use them as a guide and resource. As your students do the web-based activities, they will have questions. This section should provide you with a detailed overview of the four households, their inhabitants, and the information about each household covered in the web site.

TODD HOUSE

The Todd House, built in 1775, still stands at 343 Walnut Street. During this time period, it was considered a home for those of moderate means. The Todds inhabited the house from 1791-1793.

1. Who's who at the Todd House?

Dolley Payne Todd (1768-1849)

- born in North Carolina to a Quaker family
- raised in Virginia, and moved to Philadelphia at age 15
- married John Todd, Jr. in 1788, they had two sons
- husband, John Todd, Jr., died during the Yellow Fever epidemic of 1793
- in 1794, Dolley married James Madison, future U.S. President
- became a prominent citizen, especially in regard to social activities

John Todd, Jr. (176?-1793)

- Dolley's husband; was a lawyer and had his law office in his home
- had a pet dog named Pointer
- mentor to apprentice Isaac Heston
- died of Yellow Fever in 1793

John Payne Todd (1792-1852)

- eldest son of Dolley and John Todd
- had a weakness for gambling
- after Madison's death, Dolley had to sell the family plantation in order to pay off his debts

William Temple Todd (1793)

- son of Dolley and John Todd
- died before two months of age, possibly of yellow fever

Lucy Payne (1778-1848)

- younger sister of Dolley, resided in the Todd house
- helped with chores and child care
- married Washington's nephew, George Steptoe Washington

Anna Payne (1779-1832)

- younger sister to Dolley by 10 years, called "sister child"
- lived with Dolley in Washington, D.C. and married Congressman Richard Cutts

Isaac Heston (1770-1793)

- law apprentice to John Todd
- resided in the garret of the Todd House
- died in 1793 of Yellow Fever

2. Which primary sources are presented in the Todd section?

- John Todd's will
- John Todd's estate inventory
- letter from Isaac Heston to his brother re: the 1793 epidemic
- church burial list from August, 1793

3. What examples of material culture are presented in the Todd section?

- pewter dishes for everyday use
- silver spoons and "Creamware" teacups, for more elegant gatherings and for special guests
- musket (over door) used for the "sport" of hunting birds
- baby bottle made of pewter with cloth nipple (in dining room)
- chamber pot, made of redware (in bedroom)
- quill pen and pewter inkwell
- wooden mousetrap, found in kitchen

4. What facts about the time period are discussed in the Todd section?

This section of the website provides information about the Yellow Fever epidemic of 1793. Here are some of the facts:

- symptoms are: chills, headache, pain in limbs, fever, internal bleeding and jaundice of skin and eyeballs
- wealthy people, including Washington, fled the city to avoid the sickness
- the cause was unknown at this time, but many people thought it was caused by a shipment of rotting coffee beans that were left on the busy dock
- wealthy patients were treated by Dr. Benjamin Rush, who treated the disease by bleeding. Ironically, people who could not afford to pay for treatment were sent to a hospital set up at Bush Hill, and were treated successfully by the "French method," which involved bed rest, fresh air and liquids
- members of the Free African Society helped to nurse victims, as it was thought that African Americans were immune to this disease, but this was incorrect and many African Americans died of yellow fever

FORTEN HOUSE

The Forten House at 50 Shippen Street was purchased for James Forten by his boss, Robert Bridges, in 1792. It was located several blocks from the sail loft where James Forten worked. He lived there for 14 years. Historians are still researching whether the house still stands on Bainbridge Street in Philadelphia.

1. Who's who at the Forten House?

James Forten (1766-1842)

- born of free Africans in Philadelphia in 1766
- studied for two years at a Quaker school
- at age 14, served aboard a privateer ship (during the Revolution)
- held as prisoner of the British for seven months
- became a sailor and an apprentice to a sail maker, later owned the company
- leader in the early abolitionist movement
- helped to finance The Liberator, William Garrison's abolitionist newspaper

Margaret Forten (c.1722-1806)

- mother of James Forten
- not much is known of her background, whether or not she was a slave, her exact date of birth, nor any record of her marriage
- she was free at the time of her children's birth or her children would not have been born free
- upon her husband's death, she worked as a servant to support her family; later, her son, James, supported her and she lived in his house

Abigail Forten Dunbar (1763-1846)

- James's sister, born a free African
- worked as a domestic alongside her mother
- married William Dunbar in 1789, had four children

William Dunbar (?-1805)

- not sure where or when he was born, nor if he was ever enslaved
- Abigail's husband; James Forten's brother-in-law
- had a job as a sailor and was often away
- died in 1805, in a New York hospital after being left there by crew mates

Nicholas Dunbar (1786-1852)

- James Forten's nephew
- married a free Black woman, Jane
- became a sailor, but deserted home and family in 1816 (went to St. Croix)

Margaret Dunbar (1785-1852)

- James Forten's niece
- at age 24, married George Lewis, a man who sailed with James Forten
- was married in the Gloria Dei Church

William Dunbar, Jr. (1792-?)

- James Forten's nephew, who was 13 when his father died
- worked in Forten's sail loft
- made many sea voyages, including those to Cuba, India, and England

2. Which primary sources are presented in the Forten House section?

- reprint of a newspaper article from the London Journal
- Ann Elizabeth Fortune's will**
- pictures of Gloria Dei Church
- painting of Market Street

**Note: You will find the name Fortune used in reference to the Forten family. The name Fortune had some negative connotations at the time, so the family changed their last name to Forten instead. We have used Forten throughout to avoid confusion. When students view the last will and testament of Ann Elizabeth (James and Abigail's aunt) in the *Meet the People* section about Abigail Forten Dunbar, the name Ann Elizabeth Fortune is used, since that is how their aunt would have referred to herself and how she is listed in her last will and testament.

3. What examples of material culture are presented in the Forten House section?

- 18th Century toys
- trivets - used to hold pots, found in the fireplace
- inkwell with quills
- gold pocket watch
- period broom
- washtub and scrubbing board
- simple white creamware (ceramic dinnerware)
- handmade examples of period clothing and dresser for storage

4. What facts about the time period are discussed in the Forten House section?

This section of the website provides information about the merchants and tradesmen of this period. Here are some facts:

- sail maker: in addition to making sails, they also made other canvas items such as tents and tarps. Sails were made in sail lofts (upper floor of warehouses) to accommodate their size
- apothecary: provided a wide range of medical services in addition to medicine-making, including surgical and dental services and midwifery
- blacksmith: worked with iron and steel. A famous blacksmith, Jeremiah Elfreth, owned many houses off 2nd Street (today, Elfreth's Alley)
- mantua maker: like today's upholsterers, seamstresses, and dressmakers. Betsy Ross Claypoole was a mantua maker, who also made flags
- merchants: those who bought and shipped goods and sold them for profit. One of the wealthiest was Robert Morris, who helped to finance the Revolution and whose home became the President's house
- peruke maker: a wig maker; wigs were the fashion and also a sign of prosperity
- printer: printed newspapers, almanacs, books, and money; most famous printer was Ben Franklin
- farmer: the city was surrounded by farmland; farmers brought their products to Market Street to trade and sell

BISHOP WHITE HOUSE

The Bishop White House still exists, and is located at 309 Walnut Street. Bishop William White, rector of Christ Church, St. Peter's Church, and the first Episcopal Bishop of Pennsylvania, lived in this house from the time it was built in 1787 until his death in 1836. White chose its location because it was halfway between the two churches he served.

1. Who's who at the Bishop White House?

Bishop William White (1748-1836)

- one of the few clergymen who stayed loyal to the Patriot cause, a decision that cost him money, but made him very popular with the average citizen
- after returning from England in 1788, he moved into his new home
- served as the Chaplain of the Continental Congress
- Chaplain to the U.S. Senate when Philadelphia was the Capital City
- began many institutions to help those in need (they are listed on the website)

Mary Harrison White (1750-1797)

- Bishop White's wife
- her father was a sea captain and a former Mayor of Philadelphia
- married William White in 1773, together they had eight children
- only three of their children lived to adulthood
- assisted in schooling children at home
- entertained famous people in her home on Walnut Street
- enjoyed long visits to their country home, Brookland (was located on what is now Broad Street)
- died in the house on Walnut Street in 1797

William White (1784-1797)

- Bishop White's son
- most likely schooled at home with his older brother, Tommy
- only three years old when he moved into the Walnut Street house
- would have been taught how to read, write, spell, and draw
- may have attended the Episcopal Academy, which was begun by his father
- was said to be very close to his father
- died on January 22, 1797, at the age of 13, probably not of Yellow Fever

Thomas Harrison White (1779-1859)

- Bishop White's son
- was eight years old when the family moved into the Walnut Street house
- began his schooling at home, but later attended the Episcopal Academy
- in 1804, he married Maria Key Heath of Maryland, who died in 1814
- had five children, all born at the Walnut Street house
- in 1822, he moved back home due to his father's ill health
- attended the University of Pennsylvania, later worked for a large merchant firm owned by his uncle, Robert Morris, as "supercargo" (caretaker for the cargo)

Elizabeth White (1776-1831)

- Bishop White's daughter
- "Betsy" was the oldest child to survive and become an adult
- at home, she was taught reading, penmanship, music appreciation, and needlework
- fell in love with a famous painter's son (to her father's chagrin)
- married General William MacPherson in 1803 and they had two daughters
- after the General died in 1813, she moved back into her father's house
- served as the household manager for almost 20 years
- was the manager of the Female Bible Society of Philadelphia

Mary White (1777-1825)

- Bishop White's daughter
- Polly, as Mary was called, was most likely schooled at home
- she and her sisters entered a formal school for girls in their early teens
- married an editor of a newspaper, Enos Bronson, in late 1804
- had seven children, with five living to adulthood
- became ill and died in 1825, after which her five children lived with Bishop White

Mrs. Boggs

- was the main cook in the Bishop's house
- lived directly above the kitchen
- was in charge of doing all the laundry and keeping the house clean

John

- was the coachman (like a chauffeur today) and companion to the Bishop
- lived behind the Bishop's house
- was a free African American
- was treated by Benjamin Rush, the Bishop's neighbor, but died of Yellow Fever

2. Which primary sources are presented in the Bishop White section?

- several excerpts from the letters of Mary Harrison White
- portraits of Bishop White, Richard Allen, and Absalom Jones
- many photographs of the Bishop White House over the past 200 years
- photographs of Christ Church and Quaker Meeting House

3. What examples of material culture are presented in the Bishop White section?

- 18th Century toaster which lies on the floor in the fireplace
- coffee grinder (hung by kitchen window)
- sugar cone and nippers - sugar was snipped from the cone as needed
- wooden mousetrap found in pantry
- Canton Chinese Porcelain and children's doll house in dining room
- pianoforte, an 18th Century upright keyboard instrument
- indoor toilet, only afforded by the wealthy (no plumbing)
- mosquito netting around the Bishop's bed
- Argand lamp fueled by alcohol and camphor

4. What facts about the time period are discussed in the Bishop White section?

- facts about religion and community service are presented
- Christ Church started in 1695 as an Anglican Church of England and is still in use today as an Episcopal Church. Its members included signers of the Declaration of Independence, colonial leaders, and everyday citizens. Many famous people are buried in its burial ground, including Ben Franklin
- community associations begun by White are: School for Black and Native Americans, Philadelphia Association for the Alleviation of Miseries in Public Prisons, Dispensary for Medical Relief for the Poor, School for the Deaf
- Franklin's community contributions are also discussed: Free Library, American Philosophical Society, Pennsylvania Academy (later the University of Pennsylvania), Fire Company
- African Churches like Mother Bethel were important to the free Black community; they began organizations to help others: The Free African Society, African School for the Free Instruction of Blacks, Rush Education Society (medical), Female Benevolent Society, Library Company of Colored Persons
- Richard Allen and Absalom Jones were founders of the Free African Society
- the Quaker belief in religious tolerance encouraged people from different ethnic and religious groups to settle Philadelphia
- most Quakers are pacifists, but Free Quakers or Fighting Quakers joined the army and actively participated in the American Revolution
- Quakers were involved in a wide range of community service activities: Friends' Almshouse, Union Fire Company, Library Company, Pennsylvania Hospital, School for Black People and Their Descendants, Pennsylvania Abolition Society, Philadelphia Society for the Alleviation of Miseries of Public Prisons, and Female Society of Philadelphia for the Relief and Employment of the Poor

PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

The Robert Morris House at 190 High Street (now Market Street) became the President's house from 1790-1800. Built in the 1760's, the second floor burned in 1780, but was restored. The house no longer exists, as it was torn down in 1830. Today, the new Liberty Bell pavilion stands in this location.

1. Who's who at the President's House?

George Washington (1732-1799)

- born to a middle class planter, quit formal schooling at 15
- led Virginia militia at age 23
- General of Patriot troops during the American Revolution
- served in both first and second Continental Congresses
- head of Constitutional Convention, and was elected first president
- lived in New York and then in the President's House at 190 High Street
- retreat and home at Mount Vernon, where he retired

Martha Washington (1731-1820)

- at 18, married wealthy planter, Daniel Parke Custis
- in 1759, she married George Washington (who became wealthy upon marriage)
- was in charge of domestic scene and staff at the President's House
- hosted Friday night "levees" (parties) at 190 High Street

George Washington Parke Custis (1781-1857)

- called Wash, grandson of Martha Washington
- named after his grandfather
- his father was the son of Martha and her first husband, Daniel Parke Custis
- raised at Mount Vernon by his grandmother, Martha Washington
- was nine years old when he moved to the President's House

Eleanor Parke Custis (1779-1852)

- called Nelly, granddaughter of Martha Washington
- raised at Mount Vernon, and was a favorite of George Washington
- moved to President's House at age 11, and had a room on the second floor
- witnessed her grandfather's 2nd inauguration at Congress Hall in 1797

Tobias Lear (1762-1816)

- friend and secretary to Washington, and tutor to his grandchildren
- best bookkeeper Washington ever had, was paid \$800/year
- coordinated Washington's move from Mount Vernon to Philadelphia, and lived in the house on the 3rd floor after his marriage to Mary Long
- later became a European ambassador, then retired to Virginia

Mary Lear (1770-1793)

- called Polly, married Tobias Lear in 1790
- a close friend of Martha's, helped her with social matters
- in 1793, she became one of the first victims of Yellow Fever
- the President attended her funeral at Christ Church

Benjamin Lincoln Lear (1791-1832)

- son of Tobias and Mary, born in President's House
- raised in New Hampshire by his grandmother
- became a successful lawyer in Washington
- like his mother, died during an epidemic - 1832, of cholera

Oney Judge (1774-1848)

- an enslaved African, seamstress, and personal servant to Martha Washington
- escaped in 1796; Washington could not understand her "disloyalty"
- moved to New Hampshire and married a free African

Hercules (circa 1752-?)

- an enslaved African, cook for Washington family
- was allowed to sell leftovers, earning \$100-200 per year
- raised his three children after the death of his wife
- ran away at the end of Washington's presidency and was never found

2. Which primary sources are presented in the President's House section?

- Washington's estate inventory
- part of the personal memoir of George Washington Parke Custis
- letter from Robert Morris about the "Ice House" at 190 High Street
- photos of the excavation at 190 High Street done in 2001
- several paintings depicting events at the President's House
- many paintings and portraits of the inhabitants of the President's House
- excerpt from John Adams's letter to his wife about conditions at 190 High Street
- excerpts from Washington's letters about his escaped slaves
- Gradual Abolition Act
- painting of coach used by Washington
- photo of Deshler-Morris House in Germantown which was a presidential retreat and still stands today
- floor plan of the President's House (several rooms that may be entered)

3. What examples of material culture are presented in the President's House section?

- rug depicting the Presidential seal
- items belonging to the president and his family that may still be seen today at Mount Vernon: president's bed and desk, Nelly's harpsichord, key to the Bastille (a gift from Lafayette), and a view of Washington's kitchen in Mount Vernon
- 18th Century foot warmer, a metal box of hot coals
- 18th Century boot scraper

4. What facts about the time period are discussed in the President's House section?

This section of the website provides information about the transfer of power to the new president and some history of the Abolitionist movement. Here are some of the facts:

- in 1797, Washington peacefully handed over power to Adams; this was a first in the history of government
- other types of leaders are discussed: emperors and kings
- the Divine Right of Kings - it was thought that royalty was given the power to govern by God
- a section is devoted to the explanation of the French Revolution
- in 1787, the Free African Society was founded in Philadelphia - this organization helped to free fugitive slaves
- under the Gradual Abolition Act, slaves living in Pennsylvania for more than six months were given the right to file for freedom - Washington often took his enslaved Africans to Mount Vernon (in Virginia) in order to avoid this law
- Oney Judge tried to strike a bargain with Washington after she escaped; said she would return to serve him and Martha if he would agree to free her upon their deaths. Washington refused.